



REVIEWS

BOOKS

Reviewed by Ruth Parnell

NATIONAL INSECURITY

by Linda Weiss, Elizabeth Thurbon and John Mathews

Allen & Unwin, Australia, 2007
ISBN 978-1-74175-051-5 (298pp tpb)
Available: www.allenandunwin.com

Ten years of Australia's leadership by Prime Minister John Howard amounts to a betrayal of the nation's security, economy, culture and institutions. Howard has sold out the national interest to the USA to gain kudos in its corridors of power, to achieve status and personal glory (which he was denied in his years in the opposition wilderness), and to destroy his chief political opponent, the Australian Labor Party.

So argue Sydney-based academics Linda Weiss, Elizabeth Thurbon and John Mathews, who issued a warning in their 2004 book, *How to Kill a Country*, about the the free trade deal with the USA which even Australia's expert negotiators saw as in direct conflict with the national interest and amounted to a sell-out of the nation.

In *National Insecurity*, the authors focus on several key areas or industries—energy, rural, cultural, defence and blood supply—where PM Howard has put US strategic and economic interests first, but the astute person can name dozens more. They explain how Howard has been able to step up his personal agenda with the US Bush administration, using the alliance as an ideological platform rather than a geopolitical imperative and stifling domestic dissent in the process. They accuse him of servile pandering to George W. Bush, of making decisions

about energy/climate change policy, protection of the cattle industry from BSE, promotion of creative industries, defence procurements and safety of the nation's blood products which deliberately favour US interests.

Australians are expecting to go to the polls in late 2007, but not before Howard aggrandises himself on the regional APEC stage in Sydney in September. Have the authors considered that the PM must dance to a foreign piper's tune, regardless of who wins?

BLACKWATER:

The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army

by Jeremy Scahill

Nation Books, New York, USA, 2007
ISBN 1-5602-5979-5 (464pp tpb)
Available: www.blackwaterbook.com

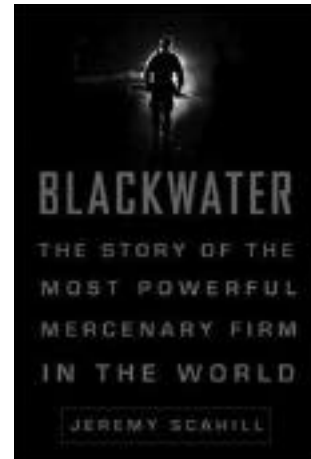
The transformation of the US military was set in motion long before the events of 9/11, thanks to the efforts of Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. However, waiting in the wings following 9/11 was Blackwater USA, a private army established in a North Carolina swamp in 1996 by multimillionaire Christian conservative and Republican Party supporter Erik Prince.

As investigative journalist Jeremy Scahill reveals in *Blackwater*, the corporation tested itself in Afghanistan but came of age three months after the massacre of some of its mercenaries in Fallujah, Iraq, on 31 March 2004, when it won the lucrative contract to provide personal security for US VIPs in Iraq (see his article in our previous edition).

While 100,000 private contractors (including military, catering, cleaning, etc. personnel) were on the ground in Iraq as of Rumsfeld's departure as US secretary of defence in November 2006, Blackwater's

contribution was small but significant—as it was in the Caspian where it built a military base only miles from the Iranian border. Today it has 2,300 private soldiers of varying nationalities deployed in nine countries, but the company can draw on 21,000 former military and law enforcement personnel at short notice and is planning a bright future where outsourcing will be instrumental in the success of foreign campaigns.

Scahill, who credits the research input of fellow investigators, says Blackwater also has big plans for forays on domestic soil. Its role in patrolling the streets following hurricane Katrina in New Orleans provided a model for intervention in future natural disaster relief efforts. What is particularly disturbing is that this company operates beyond the rule of law, whether at home or abroad. Fortunately, some Congress representatives and senators are pressing for legislation to rein in what is a new elite Praetorian Guard whose rise is a threat to democracy.



REVIEWS



THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN EMPIRE: Economic Hit Men, Jackals, and the Truth about Global Corruption

by John Perkins

Dutton Adult, USA, 2007

ISBN 0-5259-5015-X (384pp hc)

Available: <http://www.Amazon.com>

In this sequel to his bestselling 2004 *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* (see 12/06), John Perkins elaborates on his experiences as an EHM with recollections of his exploits, reflections on recent return visits, and reassessments on the social and economic devastation his actions have brought.

His travelogue takes in parts of Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, and includes testimony from "jackals" (the operatives who move in to assassinate Third World leaders if no other forms of coercion work in buying out a nation), corporate and banking executives, CIA operatives and social justice activists (e.g., a filmmaking duo out to expose Nike's sweatshop practices in Indonesia). Many of these contacts came forward after the release of Perkins's first book, and they add to the tales of plunder of local economies, disempowerment of already impoverished people and destruction of fragile environments. Several disaffected people have their say here, claiming they have long been awake to the greedy, tyrannical ways of corporations, especially those of the "American Empire". Perkins urges ordinary Americans to wake up to the fact that their disproportionately high standard of living comes at the expense of poor people in resource-rich Third World countries.

Perkins himself has been trying to make amends for the wrongs he caused as an

EHM by founding non-profit organisations aimed at creating a stable, sustainable and peaceful world. Now a passionate critic of the "corporatocracy", Perkins has ideas for transforming corporations into accountable and compassionate entities (see interview in this edition). A gripping inside story.

GENETIC ROULETTE: The Documented Health Risks of Genetically Engineered Foods

by Jeffrey M. Smith

Yes! Books, Fairfield, Iowa, USA, 2007

ISBN 0-646-46822-7 (318pp hc)

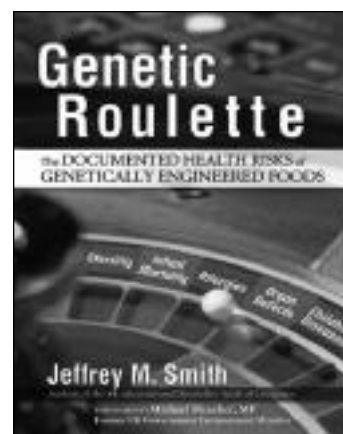
Available: www.GeneticRoulette.com

One of the world's foremost campaigners against GE technology and genetically engineered foodstuffs being foisted upon an unsuspecting public is Jeffrey Smith, executive director of the US-based Institute for Responsible Technology (<http://www.ResponsibleTechnology.org>). To follow up his bestselling *Seeds of Deception* (see review, 11/02), he has produced the definitive textbook aimed at scientist and novice alike. *Genetic Roulette* has a foreword by British MP Michael Meacher, the outspoken former environment minister, and has been vetted by a host of scientists for accuracy in its scientific reporting and referencing.

The introduction of this well-designed, large-format hardcover book gives an overview of the deceptions, assumptions and denials associated with GE/GM crops. The book is divided into four sections, covering: the documented health risks of GE foods (allergies to soybeans, for instance, have been on the rise since the introduction of GE varieties); the inadequate regulations and safeguards in place to protect public health; industry studies that are not competent to

identify most of the unpredicted side-effects for health and the environment; and an exposé of the flawed arguments used to justify GE/GM crops, e.g., that they are needed to feed the world's growing population.

Each chapter is headed with summary information and relevant quotations to assist the skimming reader but contains solid information that can be explored by keen researchers. The conclusion reiterates how resistance to imposition of GE foods is growing worldwide, has virtually halted the introduction of new GE crop varieties and, with any luck, is likely to force the withdrawal of existing GE foods from the market soon. Smith writes that there is still hope, now that US consumers are shifting away from GE towards organics, that legislation is brewing to enforce safety testing and mandatory labelling of GE content, and that some states and even schools are going GE-free. This is an important book for our times, and encourages us all to take action and personal responsibility for safe eating.





REVIEWS

SECRETS OF THE MYSTERIOUS VALLEY

by Christopher O'Brien

Adventures Unlimited Press, Kempton, Illinois, USA, 2007

ISBN 1-931882-66-5 (440pp tpb)

Available: adventuresunlimitedpress.com

The high-alpine valley of San Luis, taking in Colorado and New Mexico, USA, is a hot-spot for paranormal activity, as documented since 1989 by local researcher Christopher O'Brien (<http://www.tmv.us>). This is O'Brien's third book on the subject, and for it he draws on the hundreds of documented cases of animal mutilations, UFO sightings and events of "high strangeness" that he has investigated over the years.

Veteran Santa Fe-based cattle mutilations researcher-of-note David Perkins has written an enlightening and often wryly humorous foreword and is quite happy to present his points of disagreement with O'Brien while cheering him on in his endeavours. Perkins has influenced O'Brien in suggesting that the United States military is involved with these cattle mutilations as part of an environment-monitoring program, particularly where the animals may be located in close proximity to sites of adverse environmental conditions. Perkins also sees the mutilations as a "last frost to first frost phenomenon", indicating that cattle are targeted most often when they are grazing on pasture grass and, presumably, are exposed out in the open.

Nevertheless O'Brien points to evidence for the phenomenon going back to the early 1930s in modern times, but also for its being part of ancient legends and having some relationship with unusual electromagnetic and gravitational anomalies specific to the region. Questions regarding US government

involvement in anomalous aerial and underground activity are addressed, though not answered, in this fantastic journey that includes tales of ghosts, native sorcerers, cryptozoological creatures, space-time portals and covert military activity. It's all enough to give you the creeps!

THE STARCHILD SKULL: Genetic Enigma or ... Human-Alien Hybrid? by Lloyd Pye

Bell Lap Books, Pensacola, FL, USA, 2007
ISBN 978-0-9793881-7-0 (330pp tpb)

Available: <http://www.BellLapBooks.com>

Our regular readers will remember Lloyd Pye's contributions in 2002-03 on human creation by outside intervention rather than by Darwinian evolution or intelligent design (see 9/04 and 10/01-2). For the last eight years, Pye has been the custodian of a curious skull, dubbed "the Starchild skull", that he suggests could be from a human-alien hybrid child. His new book documents his efforts to have the right sort of scientific testing done to confirm the skull's DNA heritage as being human—perhaps a genetic anomaly—or otherwise.

The skull is from one of two skeletons (one an adult human) found in a mine tunnel in northwestern Mexico in 1930 and has been carbon dated as being around 900 years old. However, the bone is half as thick, half as heavy and twice as durable as would be expected in a normal child's skull.

As can be seen from the numerous colour plates and b&w photographs in the book, the skull has many other strange features—microscopic durable fibres and an unusual reddish residue within the bone, an abnormally flattened occipital region and shallow eye sockets—which can't be explained away

by any known types of deformity.

In his travels with the skull under the auspices of the Starchild Project, Pye has been treated with the usual derision meted out to anyone touting something so removed from the norm, and the idea that the skull may be of alien origin has been met with scepticism. He has always called for open-mindedness in relation to this unusual artefact, as he has with his alternative theories on humanity's origins. Nevertheless, some progress has been made. Geneticists at the University of California at Davis in 2003 extracted mitochondrial DNA from the skull, but could not recover any paternal nuclear DNA—thus suggesting a hybrid status. Now, a company called 454 Life Sciences has developed a radical new DNA recovery technique that can be used to analyse the skull, but results will take yet more time. So, while the jury is out, Pye regales us with the stories of what he's been through to get this far.

For a peek at what it's all about, visit <http://www.starchildproject.com>.



REVIEWS



AGAINST RELIGION

by Tamas Pataki

Scribe Short Books, Melbourne, 2007

ISBN 978-1-921215-18-6 (136pp pb)

Available: <http://www.scribepub.com.au>

Several books questioning the basis of religion and religious belief have been published recently. Here we review three of them, starting with *Against Religion* by Tamas Pataki, an honorary senior fellow in the philosophy department at the University of Melbourne and an honorary fellow at Deakin University. Pataki analyses the psychology behind religions, focusing mostly on the so-called Abrahamic monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and concludes that they are based on fear, wishful thinking and a misplaced infantile, narcissistic "phantasy" of omnipotence which is a form of mental illness.

In his philosophical critique, Pataki examines the factors that are common to most religions and also considers the undue influence of "the religiose", which he takes to include most groups that can be defined as "fundamentalist". While he doesn't dispute that many members of religions perform charitable tasks based on love and moral principles, he argues that religion is not identical to morality: confusing the two only fuels the pretension of the "religious right" to the high moral ground.

When fundamentalists are so filled with the certainty of being the chosen elite doing the will of the Supreme Being, it's no wonder, says Pataki, that they commit acts of violence in the name of this often harsh God, insist on invoking theocratic laws, subordinate women and homosexuals out of fear, and sacrifice reason to revelation. Pataki utilises developmental psychology and

psychoanalysis to show why these fundamentalist beliefs and actions are not only unenlightened but are threatening the foundations of civil societies everywhere. We're seeing it today in the growth of their undue influence in world affairs, he says.

Pataki criticises Richard Dawkins's proposition in *The God Delusion* that religious belief is an accidental by-product of biology that confers evolutionary advantage and is also a by-product of our tendency to fall in love. Pataki's stance is that religion satisfies unconscious needs and dispositions, and thus is not in the realm of the rational. It is a creature of and reaction to human needs, particularly the need to be loved. A polemic with a compelling psychological bent.

GOD IS NOT GREAT:

How Religion Poisons Everything

by Christopher Hitchens

Allen & Unwin, Aust & NZ, 2007, by arrangement with Warner Books, New York, USA, 2007

ISBN 978-1-74175-222-9 (307pp tpb)

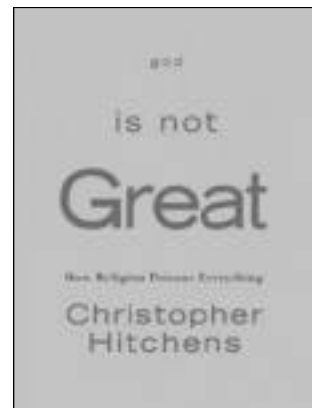
Available: www.allenandunwin.com

British journalist, author and well-known "public intellectual" Christopher Hitchens launches a scathing attack on religion in *God Is Not Great*, taking no prisoners. Everywhere he's been in his travels, from the Balkans to Ireland, from Israel to Pakistan, from Lebanon to the USA, he's had cause to reflect on conflicts resulting from clashes of religious belief systems. If these religions are so great, why do so many of their adherents behave so appallingly to those who don't share exactly their brand of faith, he asks. Religion obviously is not the answer to regional or world peace.

Hitchens argues for a secular world based

on science and reason, not on myths and wishful thinking. He expounds on why the metaphysical claims of religion are false, outlines the "transparent fables" in the "holy books" of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, expands on savage moments in religious history, and deplores how religion is forced upon impressionable young children in a way that's akin to child abuse.

Monarchs who have ruled under "divine right", Vatican leaders who accommodated Nazi horrors for the sake of *realpolitik*, and the vile apartheid system in South Africa are part of the territory in Hitchens's response to "the case against secularism". Finally, he points to the confrontation between faith and civilisation in an Iran intent on becoming a nuclear power. What we need, he says, is a renewed Enlightenment, a humane civilisation, in which we can ask the eternal ethical questions without religion entering the discourse, pursue unfettered scientific inquiry, and divorce the fear, guilt and repression from the sexual life. Hitchens is informative and insightful, if not controversial.





REVIEWS

THE DEATH OF RELIGION AND THE REBIRTH OF SPIRIT

by Joseph Chilton Pearce

Park Street Press, Rochester, USA, 2007

ISBN 1-59477-171-5 (261pp hc)

Available: www.InnerTraditions.com

Veteran human potential nurturer Joseph Chilton Pearce (*The Crack in the Cosmic Egg; The Biology of Transcendence*, see 9/06) points to culture and religion as underlying a negative imprint stamped on us in early childhood. In effect, it's a force-field that blocks our connection between our heart and higher brain and prevents the natural rise of spirit towards the love and altruism that are part of our innate nature.

Pearce contends that generation after generation we've been conditioned to believe that without the constraints of culture we would be demonic, violent beasts, and so we've been forced to accept religion, being culture's principal support, to save us from our inherently violent natures. But history, as we know, is full of examples of failure of the spirit under the guise of religion.

So what's the solution? Pearce says it is biological, referring to the logic of life itself, and it lies in knowledge of consciousness field effects and the "mindset of the heart"—the nonjudgemental creative force of the heart-brain dialogue. We can resume our evolutionary progress when we realise that we have a fourth brain—one that was subsumed or seduced by the instinctual drives of the three older brains (reptilian or hind, and old and new mammalian) before it was sufficiently developed. If we had properly developed fourth brains seated in heart intelligence, we'd have nurturing, loving, compassionate societies and no violence, war and repression. We also have to overturn

the devolutionary effect of today's religions, both scientific and ecclesiastic, if we seek a true science and spirituality, says Pearce in his ultimately positive thesis.

THERE IS NO TIME:

Motional Perspective & Motional Escalation of Energy

by John R. S. Peck, ASTC

John Peck, Galston, NSW, Australia, 2006

ISBN 0-646-46822-7 (92pp tpb)

Available: www.johnpeckscience.com

Retired Sydney electrical engineer John Peck has put his passion for physics to good use. Here he theorises that time does not form part of the universe, and thus many scientific concepts that utilise time in their formulae are incorrect. In his well-produced self-published book, Peck first gives an historical perspective on time and lists many scales of time measurement, taking into account such notions as quantum time, calendar time, longitude and radians (fractional intervals of the Earth's rotation). He reasons that time is a concept, a human construct; thus it is wrong to treat it as an entity.

Next, Peck examines apparent anomalies concerning fast motion, which he says can be explained in terms of classical physics rather than relativity theories. To argue his case that time is not motion-dependent and does not vary with motion, he uses examples of trains and light sources, aircraft and clocks, sea-dwellers and mountain-dwellers.

He then takes a new look at the three so-called Fitzgerald-Lorentz Transformation equations of length, time and mass, which hold that while both length (space) and time are seen to contract, mass becomes larger. Peck claims that objects in motion do *not* undergo a contraction in length together

with an increase in mass, as suggested by the Michelson-Morley interferometer experiment. He disputes Einstein's special theory of relativity, saying it is a mistake to presume that the velocity of light is the same constant numerical value c within a given frame of reference and that all observers in that same frame will see the same velocity of light. According to his new theory of Motional Perspective, Peck says that any contraction related to angular displacement is just a visual effect, and he proposes simplified equations that counter the anomalies. And contrary to special relativity, time does not run slower but shorter in Peck's Time Contraction equation. Finally, in his theory of Motional Escalation of Energy, the mass component in the mass Transformation equation should be replaced by a force component. So too, should the international unit of mass be considered a force unit because the very process of weighing introduces a gravitational acceleration component.

Peck's is a thought-provoking thesis that deserves attention from serious physicists.



REVIEWS



WHAT REALLY CAUSES MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

by Harold D. Foster

Trafford Publishing, BC, Canada, 2006

ISBN 1-4251-1636-1 (221pp tpb)

Available: www.trafford.com/4dcgi/view-item?item=19403; www.hdfoster.com

In his latest addition to his *What Really Causes...* series, Harold Foster, PhD, turns his attention to multiple sclerosis (MS), an autoimmune disease in which the myelin sheath around the nerves deteriorates to such an extent that electrical impulses are prevented from travelling along the nerve fibres, causing a decline in mental and physical functions. Again, Dr Foster draws on geographic models showing incidence of the disease around the world and finds multiple sclerosis as well as other autoimmune conditions such as Parkinson's disease in countries where the soil is iodine-deficient and where dairy products and gluten-containing grains are consumed. Again, it's not genet-



ics but environment that triggers the disease in most cases, as Dr Foster has observed in over 20 years of research along this line.

He has devised a three-step hypothesis to explain the cause of MS, and if it's correct then MS should be easy to prevent and reverse (Dr Foster's AIDS treatment protocols are being successfully applied in several African nations; see review, 10/05, article 11/01-02). He posits first that MS patients suffer from chronic inflammation caused by diets with inadequate antioxidant and omega-3 intakes, excess sugar, foods that fail to reduce oxidative stress, gluten, cow's milk and perhaps allergens. Second, there is a thyroid hormone deficiency that causes an abnormal need for dopamine—a hormone that can break down to form toxic indoles which in turn kill oligodendrocytes, the cells needed to repair the damage to myelin caused by chronic inflammation. Third, myelin deteriorates further because a shortage of the enzyme triiodothyronine in MS patients reduces their ability to produce new oligodendrocytes. Others have proposed

that this thyroid malfunction is related to iodine deficiency or inadequate thyroid hormone production in foetal or early childhood development. Dr Foster refers to the anti-inflammatory diet plans of key nutritional researchers and includes a (by no means exhaustive) table of the inflammatory and anti-inflammatory potential of a range of foods. He discusses ways to address the dopamine and enzyme deficiencies with vitamin, enzyme, essential fatty acid and mineral supplementation, and particularly advocates pregnant women topping up against possible iodine deficiency.

Dr Foster concludes from his analyses that there *are* paths to MS prevention and treatment that are simple as well as accessible.

COLLOIDAL SILVER: Hidden Truths by Keith F. Courtenay (Dr Metaphysics)

The Courtenay House Publishers,

Conondale, Qld, 2007, 3rd edition

ISBN 978-1-876494-10-0 (359pp tpb)

Avail: The Courtenay House, 21 Herron

Road, Conondale, Qld 4552, Australia,

www.houseofcourtenay.wetpaint.com

Silver has been known for its powerful germicidal properties for millennia.

Ancient Chinese healers worked with silver acupuncture needles, and the metal was widely used in clinical environments until the 1930s when, with the introduction of penicillin, it fell out of favour.

In colloidal form (as well as in other forms), silver has a long pedigree in treating a range of ills from acne, burns and cancer to pneumonia, septicaemia and yeast (*Candida*) infections. Over the years it has been documented to kill 650 disease-causing pathogens including bacteria, fungi and viruses, attests Keith Courtenay in the expanded third edition of his handbook on this amazing preparation. Unfortunately, as of 2002, this relatively inexpensive solution with nanoparticles of silver in suspension can only be sold in Australia for water purification purposes; no claims as to its therapeutic value can be made. Soon it may only be available on prescription, as is the case in the UK, and its resurgence in the USA is being curbed by the EPA and the FDA—after all, it is a genuine threat to Big Pharma. Courtenay is not shy with his views on how this safe, non-toxic, efficacious preparation is being suppressed at the behest of the pharmaceutical giants.

But views aside, there's some solid information in these pages on colloidal silver chemistry, history, research, use in disease treatment, dosage and more, as well as on other mineral colloids like copper and gold. Courtenay's new edition, a work in progress, is still the most comprehensive collection of colloidal silver information I've seen.



REVIEWS

THE DIVINE MATRIX

by Gregg Braden

Hay House, USA, 2007

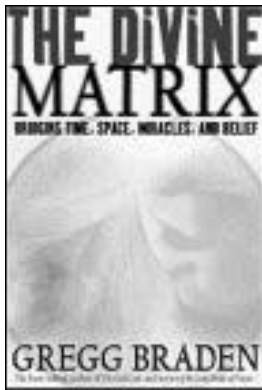
ISBN 978-1-4019-0573-6 (240pp tpb)

Available: <http://www.hayhouse.com>;

www.hayhouse.com.au; hayhouse.co.uk

Combining the implicate order idea proposed by quantum physics pioneer David Bohm, with its "creative operation of underlying...levels of reality", and the holographic mind notion posited by consciousness researcher Karl Pribram, former aerospace computer systems designer Gregg Braden reasserts and demystifies the model of an interconnected matrix that is basic to many ancient wisdom traditions. Braden has been doing his bit to shatter unworkable paradigms for 20 years, and his first book, *Awakening to Zero Point*, was a landmark in reconciling the worlds of science and spirit.

First of all in *The Divine Matrix*, Braden describes the so-called "space between" and explores the sense that we're all united by a



field of energy that connects everything. He uses several famous experiments which suggest that not only does our DNA have a direct effect on the material world, but that human emotion, or feeling, has a direct effect on the DNA which in turn affects the world. Furthermore, this relationship transcends space and time: these experiments show effects regardless of, say, distance between a Petri dish DNA sample and the person from whom the DNA was taken.

Braden aims to show how we can use this matrix in our lives, and this means understanding how everything is linked holographically, so that ordinary concepts such as "here" and "there" are meaningless because "here is already there". If we can courageously take on board these concepts of "nonlocality", we can understand how a prayer we direct to a loved one far away is received instantaneously. We can then apply this "nonlocal" awareness to the collective consciousness by visualising positive realities with feeling and intent. Braden shows how we can make this unified field a

practical reality, steeped in "the divine".

Using data from social research studies as well as the well-known "Maharishi effect", Braden has worked out that the minimum number of people required to "jump-start" a change in consciousness is the square root of 1% of a population. For a city of one million, all it takes is 100 people to be at one in their personal peace. The "rules" of the matrix that Braden describes are workable keys for us to learn total connectedness.

HOW WE WERE MADE: A Book of Revelations

by William Neil

Oracle Books, Reading, UK, 2007 2nd ed.

ISBN 978-0-9545957-1-5 (245pp tpb)

Available: Oracle Books, email oracle-books@onetel.com

In the preface to his new edition of *How We Were Made*, London-based author William Neil declares that engineers, with their inventiveness, have improved living standards through the ages. Himself an engineer, Neil has turned his curious mind to the question of how life itself works—and he discovered the answer is mathematical.

His thesis centres around base 6, or 60 as used by the ancient Sumerians (and 20, one-third of 60, by the Mayans), and it suggests that we as well as our planet and solar system have been constructed or placed according to this "engineering specification" of base six. The number six was fundamental to the earliest Egyptian calendar—made up of a 360-day year of 36 decans of 10-day weeks. Neil speculates that this number system was put in place not by God but by "them" whom we may call gods—engineers working within the Galactic Ordering and Delivery System (GODS)! To him, it's no accident that the same "bizarre numbers" keep cropping up all over the place.

Neil demonstrates a host of dazzling numerical correspondences, mostly extrapolated from the famous number 666: multiplied out (6 x 6 x 6), it gives a key number 216, which produces other fundamental constants when it is divided or multiplied. Interestingly, the sum of all the numbers between 1 and 36 is 666!

Neil applies his findings to show how 666 and related numbers can be found in the human form (apparently there are 216 bones in the human body!), in our DNA, in monuments like the Great Pyramid and Stonehenge, in the Earth's position in the solar system, and in ancient and modern measurement systems. It can even be seen in the "building and placing" of the Moon, which he calculates is hollow apart from a 300-mile thick crust.

If you're fascinated by numbers and sacred geometry, this book will be a treat.

REVIEWS



BOOKS

Reviewed by Duncan Roads

THE RINGING CEDARS SERIES

by Vladimir Megre

Ringling Cedars Press, 2006-07

(edited by Leonid Sharashkin, translated by John Woodsworth; 8-book series)

Book 4 – *Co-Creation*,

ISBN 978-0-9763333-3-3;

Book 5 – *Who Are We?*,

ISBN 978-0-9763333-4-0;

Book 6 – *The Book of Kin*,

ISBN 978-0-9763333-6-4

Available: NEXUS offices;

www.ringingcedars.com

In 1994, a Siberian elder told the entrepreneur Vladimir Megre a fascinating story about the "ringing cedars"—trees respected from biblical times for their curative powers and the capacity to reconnect human beings with the Divine. The elder told him where such a ringing cedar was growing in the Siberian backwoods.

Vladimir Megre set out on an expedition to find the tree. But his encounter with the elder's granddaughter, Anastasia, transformed him so deeply that he abandoned his commercial plans and, penniless, went to Moscow to write a book about the spiritual insights she shared with him. What happened next thrilled and inspired millions.

With no advertising other than word-of-mouth, the Ringing Cedars Series has become an international bestseller, translated into 20 languages, with over 10 million copies published in Russian alone.

Co-Creation, the fourth book and centerpiece of the series, paints a dramatic living image of the creation of the Universe and humanity's place in this creation, making this primordial mystery relevant to our everyday living today. Deeply metaphysical yet at the same time down-to-



Earth practical, this heartfelt volume helps us uncover answers to the most significant questions about the essence and meaning of the Universe and the nature and purpose of our existence. It also shows how and why the knowledge of these answers, innate in every human being, has become obscured and forgotten, and points the way towards reclaiming this wisdom and—in partnership with Nature—manifesting the energy of Love through our lives.

Who Are We?, the fifth book of the series, describes the author's search for real-life "proofs" of Anastasia's vision presented in the previous volumes. Finding these proofs and taking stock of ongoing global environmental destruction, Vladimir Megre describes further practical steps for putting Anastasia's vision into practice. Full of beautiful, realistic images of a new way of living in co-operation with the Earth and each other, this book also highlights the role of children in making us aware of the precariousness of the present situation and in leading the global transition towards a happy, violence-free society.

The Book of Kin, the sixth book of the series, describes another visit by the author to Anastasia's glade in the Siberian taiga and his conversations with his growing son, which cause him to take a new look at education, science, history, family and Nature.

Through parables and revelatory dialogues and stories, Anastasia then leads Vladimir Megre and the reader on a shocking rediscovery of the pages of humanity's real history that have been distorted or kept secret for thousands of years. This knowledge sheds light on the causes of war, oppression and violence in the modern world and guides us in preserving the wisdom of our ancestors and passing it over to future generations.



REVIEWS

MUSIC

Reviewed by Richard Giles

PUTUMAYO WORLD PARTY

by various artists

Putumayo, USA, 2007 (44mins)

Distributors: **Aust**—MRA, tel (07) 3849 6020; **UK**—Putumayo Music, tel 07759 600495; **USA**—www.putumayo.com

This new Putumayo album features music to get up and dance to; reggae, ska, salsa and zydeco are among the varied styles of hot-footed music. Artists include Burning Spear, Los Pinguos, Roy Paci and Aretuska, Osibisa, Laid Back, Sarazino and more. If it's a party you want, this is the perfect loose and easy accompaniment: the best of global music with names you'll love to hear over and over. It's feel-good, sunny music.

GYPSY MOON

by Priyo

Sounds True, USA, 2007 (48mins)

Distributors: **Australia**—Brumby Books and Music, tel (03) 9761 5535; **USA**—Sounds True, tel 1800 333 9185, website <http://www.soundstrue.com>

Sicilian-born Priyo, the leader behind the music sensations One at Last and Gypsy Moon (which he formed in Byron Bay, Australia, in 1992), puts flamenco guitar straight into the spotlight. On *Gypsy Moon*, he creates a fresh, sultry sound by blending the heartbeat of African drums and the groove of trance-dance electronica with his smooth flamenco guitar. With an intoxicating mingling of past and present traditions, he liberates the Spanish sound, creating a sensuous and contemporary evolution of flamenco in a trance-dance style.

HERITAGE

by Mamadou Diabate

World Village, Europe, 2006 (50mins)

Distributors: **Aust**—Select Audio, tel (02) 8966 3307; **Germany**—Harmonia Mundi, tel +49 (0)711 2567671; **USA**—<http://www.worldvillagemusic.com>

Malian kora player Mamadou Diabate is, by birth, a member of the *jeli* (griot) caste of musicians in his native Bambara. His lineage goes back to the 13th century with the founding of the Mande Empire. Now living in the USA, he performs throughout North America and Europe and is committed to bringing the kora (a 21-string harp) to new audiences. While he has played with jazz artists and other musicians, he remains faithful to his kora and *jeli* roots. *Heritage*, his third album, features traditional kora backed by some interesting jazz and contemporary styles. Mamadou Diabate has

been named the 2007 World Music Artist of the Year by the American Folk Alliance.

LA JUDERIA

by Yasmin Levy

Connecting Cultures Music, The Netherlands, 2005 (59mins)

Distributors: **Australia**—MRA, tel (07) 3849 6020; **Europe**—Connecting Cultures, tel +31 (0)594 212120, website <http://www.choicemusic.nl>; <http://www.yasminlevy.net>

Born in Jerusalem in 1975, Yasmin Levy was introduced at a young age to the Ladino language and style of singing which stemmed from the Spanish Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492. Her father was a leading figure in the preservation of this Judaeo-Spanish heritage. In her profoundly spiritual and passionate vocal style, Yasmin revives beautiful Ladino songs, mixing them with an Andalusian flamenco bent on this, her second album. She has received rave reviews from world music aficionados. Soaring and inspiring!

ALEVANTA!

by Benjamín Escoriza

Riverboat/World Music Network, UK, 2007 (43mins)

Distributors: **Australia**—MRA, tel (07) 3849 6020; **UK**—World Music Network, tel 020 7489 5252, website <http://www.worldmusic.net>

Though it disbanded last year, the Spanish group Radio Tarifa is still celebrated for its blending of flamenco, Latin, North African and popular music. Vocalist/lyricist Benjamín Escoriza, who co-founded the group in the early 1990s, has pursued his own great love of the flamenco form by releasing his first solo album. *Alevanta!* is red-hot flamenco, tinged with rumba and tango colours and flavoured with several Moroccan-influenced mixes. Try "Rap de Marrakech" and "Talismán" for some hot, fast tracks. Exciting and rousing music.

